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ABSTRACT

Third-grade students generally lack the social skills needed to resolve conflicts. This report describes a program for improving the social skills of third graders attending a middle-class suburban school. The researcher selected a resolution program which would address those problems outlined by a classroom teacher in an incident report, a teacher reflection journal, and the teacher's record of time spent on conflict resolution in the classroom. An analysis of the probable cause data revealed that students were unaware of options available to them to solve problems on their own. Likewise, many of the strategies students used to resolve conflict were ineffective. Solutions suggested by experts, combined with an examination of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention: (1) develop lesson plans to teach the prescribed steps for conflict resolution; and (2) teach conflict resolution for thirty minutes daily over a six week period. After training, students learned how to communicate and how to understand the severity of their problems. Results also indicate that parents who adopted a conflict resolution program at home increased the effectiveness of the conflict resolution program. The conflict resolution program may be used from kindergarten up to grade 12. (RJM)

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IMPROVING SOCIAL SKILLS OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING

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AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP

SAINT XAVIER UNIVERSITY-IRI
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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving the social skills needed for conflict resolution with the target third grade students in a growing, middle class suburban community located in northern Illinois. A program was selected to resolve the problem that was noted by the classroom teacher who found that the students were unable to solve conflicts among themselves and with the teacher. Their inability to resolve conflicts on their own diminished time spent on instruction. An incident report, a teacher reflection journal, and records on time spent on conflict resolution confirmed the problem existed and to what extent.

An analysis of the probable cause data showed that the students were unaware of options available to solve problems on their own. The analysis also showed that the ways they used to solve problems on their own were often ineffective.

Solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention: the development of lesson plans designed to teach the prescribed steps for conflict resolution; and the teaching of the process of solving conflicts for thirty minutes daily over a six week period.

Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

Third grade students lack the social skills needed to enable them to resolve conflicts among themselves and their teachers, increasing class time spent for disciplinary purposes, as evidenced by teacher observation, teacher journal, increased number of discipline related phone calls, and survey of students.

Immediate Problem Context

Anderson Elementary School, in St. Charles Community Unit School District 303, is located in the northeastern part of St. Charles. It has a total enrollment of 292. The school consists of grades two through five. Anderson is one of ten elementary schools in the St. Charles public school system.

The school day begins at 8:50 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. Approximately 93 percent of the students ride busses. The racial/ethnic make-up of the students is 94.2 percent White, 1.7 percent Black, 3.1 percent Hispanic, and 1.0 percent Asian/Pacific Islander (Saint Charles community Unit School District 303 School Report Card, 1992). The percent of students eligible for bilingual education is 0.3. Low income

students are 9.9 percent of the Anderson School population, as compared to the district percent of 2.3. Mobility rate at the school is 15.2 percent. It is one of the highest in the district.

The school is administered by one principal. The administration office consists of one full time secretary, on part-time secretary, and a one-day-a-week nurse. There are 15 classroom teachers; three second grade teachers, four third grade teachers, three fourth grade teachers, three fifth grade teachers and two teachers of the hearing impaired. Anderson also employs one art teacher, one music teacher, one physical education teacher, one Chapter 1 reading teacher, one reading resource, one media specialist, one learning/behavior disability teacher and an aide. Anderson has other specialists working one or two days a week. They include: one speech and language teacher, one psychologist, one social worker, one orchestra teacher, and one band teacher. The research will be conducted in a third grade classroom with 22 students.

The Surrounding Community

St. Charles School District is located 40 miles west of Chicago, making it the farthest reaching western suburb. According to the 1990 Census this rapidly growing community has a population of 23,903 citizens. The past ten years have shown a growth rate of 2.8 percent.

Projected growth is 2.8 percent. A referendum passed in 1987 allowed the school district to build two new elementary schools. The existing district is comprised of ten elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The continued increase in school population necessitates a 900 student addition to the high school, a new middle school, and additions to nearly all elementary schools. A referendum passed in the spring of 1993 increased the average property taxes per household by one to two percent. The community's socio-economic status as reflected by the average family income is $68, 676, with an average increase of 7.3 percent per family per year. The predominantly white collar community has 2.3 percent of its students receiving public aid. The racial make-up of this homogeneous community is approximately 97 percent white, two percent Hispanic, one percent Asian, and .4 percent black.

According to the 1990 Census, 30 percent of the adult population of St. Charles has completed two or less years of undergraduate studies, and 36 percent of the adult community holds a bachelors, graduate, or professional degree.

There are 62.8 percent married persons living within the community and 7.7 percent divorced. Of the married couples, 47.3 percent have children. There are 8.4 percent single-parent households. The percentage

of children entering or leaving the school district during the school year is 9.3 percent.

The total school population for St. Charles School District 303 is 8,768. There are 3,955 children enrolled in grades kindergarten through five, 2,063 enrolled in grades six through eight, 2,535 enrolled in grades nine through twelve, and 215 enrolled in the Special Education Program. The school district originally valued the idea of neighborhood schools, but in recent years the increase in population has changed this to some degree due to redistricting. Ninety-five percent of middle and high school students are now bused (Cannon, H., Transportation Coordinator C.U.S.D. 303).

A superintendent and various assistant superintendents provide the top level of administration for the district. The high school has one principal with four assistant principals. The middle schools each have one principal and one assistant principal. Each of the ten elementary schools has one principal.

Regional and National Context of Problem

Conflict is a natural human state. Throughout the ages humanity has had to deal with this aspect of human nature (Roderick, 1988). In the 1960's, with the uprising of the peace movement, the necessity for

peaceful resolution of problems became apparent. The coming of the nuclear age alarmed peace activists who began to incorporate techniques for conflict resolution into their lives (NAME, 1993). The United States government encouraged citizens to settle disputes peaceably out of court. Then in 1984, a group of educators and community members in Massachusetts saw the need to teach children how to deal with anger constructively and formed the National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME). Since that time many other institutions have been formed; Cambridge Ridge and Latin High School's Student Mediation Program, Educators for Social Responsibility, Ellen Raider International, The International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (I.C.C.C.R.), and the School Initiatives Program Community Board Center for Policy and Training (Scherer, 1992).

The development of the many programs and institutions shows the response to the increase of violence among the young. "Young bullies have a one in four chance of having a criminal record by age 30," (Coulter,1989 p.1). These bullies will not always grow out of their aggressive behavior.

"The key is not to avoid conflicts, but to teach students how to handle them" (Burke, 1992, p.xxv). According to research cited by the National Association for the Mediation in Education (NAME, 1993), conflict

resolution helps to decrease violence and fighting, reduce name-calling and put downs, decrease the number of suspensions, increase self-esteem and self-respect, enable teachers to deal more effectively with conflicts, and improve school climate.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Background

The need for conflict resolution is an issue which has not yet been addressed at a consistent district-wide level in St. Charles School District 303. Some individual schools in the district, however, have expressed a need for some means of conflict resolution and are beginning to address the problem through programs such as D.A.R.E. (fifth grade) and Q.U.E.S.T. (sixth grade). These schools feel there is a need for a systematic program to consistently follow through the grade levels.

Problem Evidence

Both subjective and objective means of documentation were used to determine the amount of time spent each day for student/student or student/teacher conflicts, the number of conflicts per day, and the type of conflicts occurring each day. The research team gathered time spent per day for dealing with conflicts by using a stop-watch to keep a daily cumulative record. The research team will not count time spent on ordinary classroom discipline.

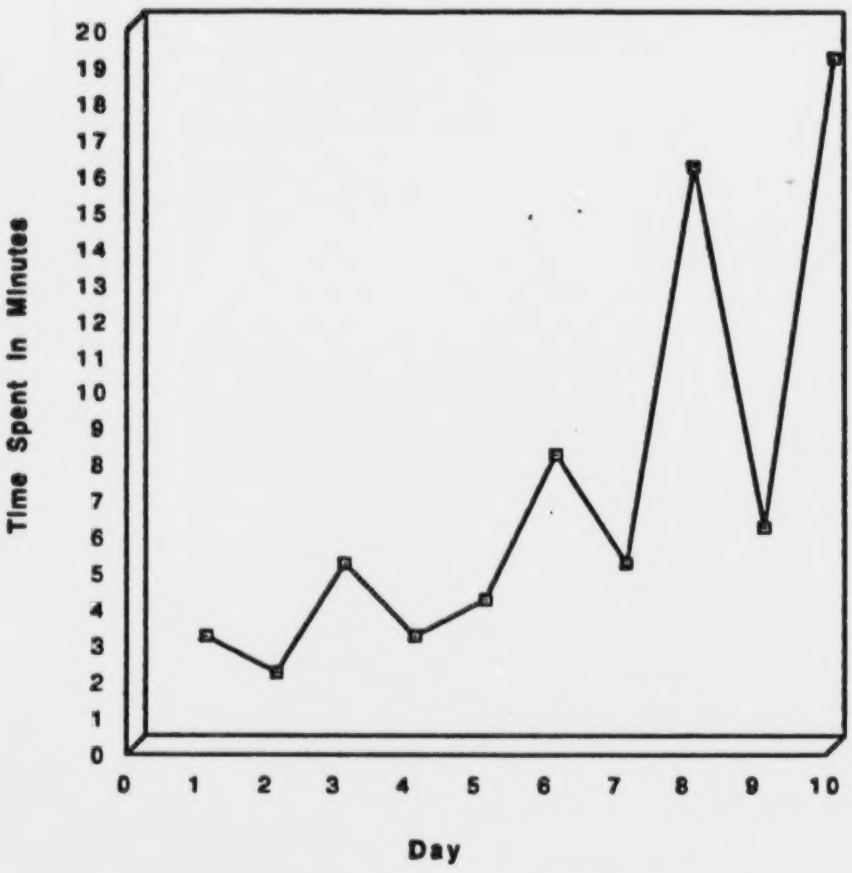

Figure 1

Time Spent Resolving Student Conflict

Figure 1 presents the pre-intervention data collected from the third grade class with regards to time spent of student/student or teacher/student conflicts. The teacher observed the largest amount of

time spent for disciplinary purposes on the eighth and tenth day. The other eight days showed a variety of time spent per day for disciplinary purposes, increasing each day except for the ninth day.

Table 1

Number and Type of Conflicts

Days	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Tattling				1	1	1			2	3	8
Hitting	1			1		1			2		5
Interruption		1				1	1				3
Off-Task			1				1	1	1		4
Name-Calling					1					2	3
Other			1							1	2
Total											25

Table 1 presents the data collected through teacher journals. The teacher journal allowed for specific documentation of the type and number of conflicts per day. Throughout the ten days of pre-intervention data collection, the teacher observed eight incidences of tattling, five incidences of hitting, three incidences of interruption, four incidences of off-task behavior, three incidences of name-calling, and two incidences of others including lying, making faces, shoving, invading the personal

property of others, and breaking the property of a fellow student.

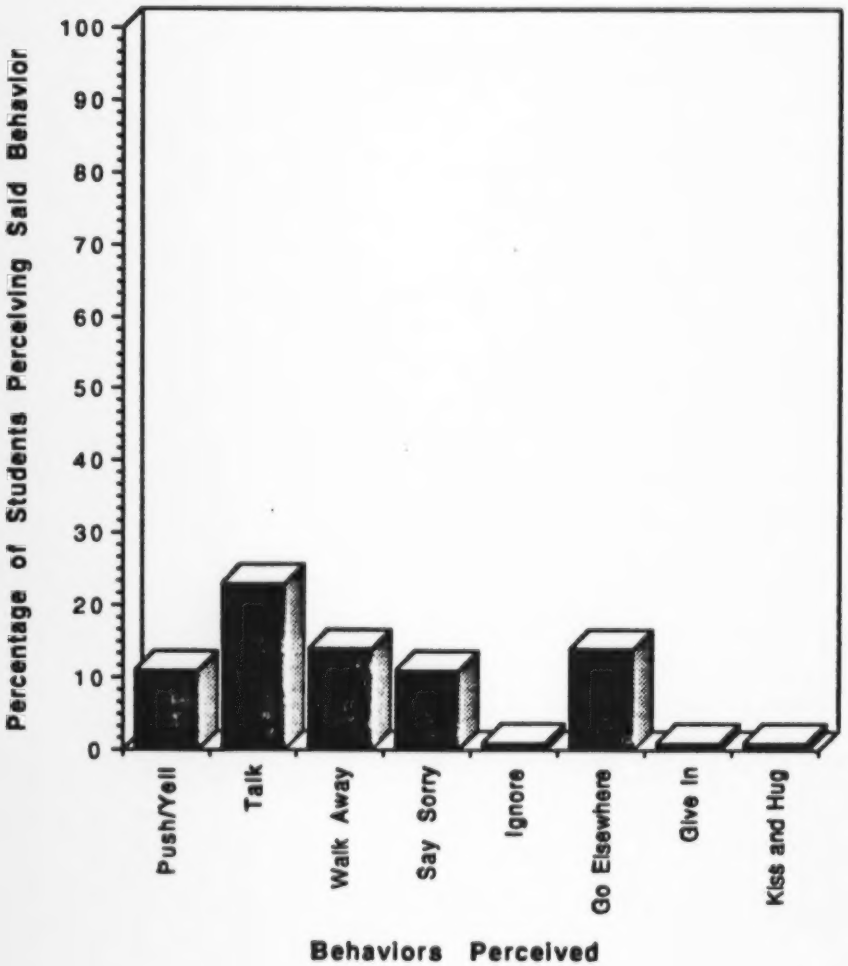

Figure 2

Role Modeled Behaviors

Figure 2 presents the data collected with regards to role modeled behaviors. On the pre-intervention survey, the students were asked to list three ways in which they had seen adults solve disagreements. Eleven percent of the students indicated they had seen adults push and yell. Talking was the most popular way of dealing with conflicts as indicated by 23 percent of the students. Fourteen percent of the students had seen their adult role models walk away from the conflict. Eleven percent of the students stated they had seen adults say they were sorry. Ignoring the conflict, giving in, and hugging and kissing were each indicated by one percent of the students. Fourteen percent of the students listed going elsewhere as a method of solving conflict.

Probable Cause of Problem

Data to indicate probable cause factors was collected through a pre-intervention survey of students. The target class selected for the study included one third grade class. All students were given the survey after a ten day observation period. The intent of the pre-intervention survey was to determine students' attitudes about conflict resolution, with specific regards to the understanding the ways adults resolve conflict, peer pressure, self-esteem, cultural differences, communication skills, and school climate (Appendix A).

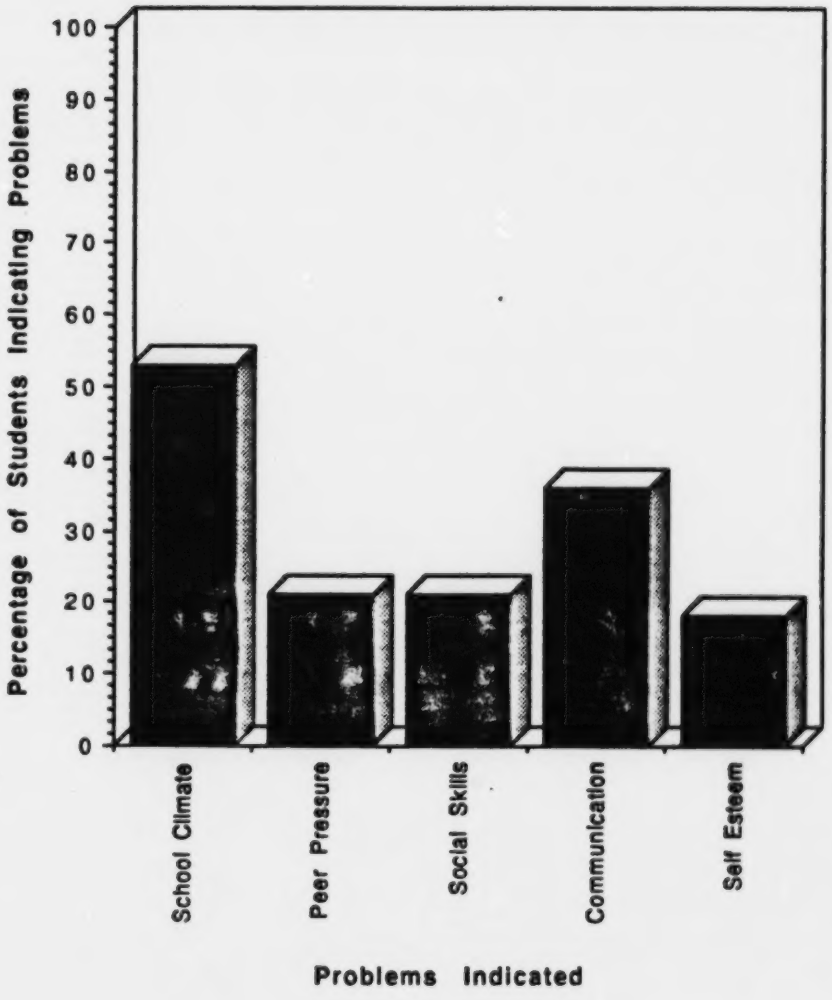

Figure 3

Pre-Intervention Survey Results

Figure 3 shows the percentage of students indicating problems with school climate, peer pressure, social skills, communication, and self-esteem. This information was obtained through the administration of the pre-intervention survey of students. Questions relating to school climate showed 53 percent of the students perceived a problem with school climate. Twenty-one percent saw a problem with peer-pressure. Social skills were a problem for 21 percent of the students. Communication was seen as the second largest problem, with 36 percent of the students indicating problems in this area. The number of students with a perceived self-esteem problem was 19 percent.

A summary of probable causes for the problem gathered from the site and from the literature included the following elements:

1. Instructional time is being spent resolving student conflicts.
2. Students choices for solving conflicts are inappropriate.
3. Some students are not observing role models using appropriate conflict resolution skills.
4. School climate and communication had the largest impact on students' choices in resolving conflicts.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Analysis of probable cause data suggested reasons related to lack of social skills training, poor adult role models for resolving conflict, poor school climate, inability to accept cultural differences, low student self-esteem, peer pressure, and the inability to communicate effectively. In addition to these data, research literature suggested the following probable causes: students participating in gang activities, abusive families, increased violence, competition rather than cooperation, conflicting personality characteristics, different religious backgrounds, and varied socio-economic backgrounds.

The literature search for solution strategies was organized as suggested by these probable cause data. Analysis of these data suggested that a series of questions related to social skills needed for conflict resolution and improvement of school climate should be addressed. The issues related to social skills needed included: 1) providing students with positive role models, 2) helping students to understand and accept different cultural backgrounds, 3) helping students to value themselves, 4) helping students with the pressures from their peers, 5) teaching

student different ways to communicate effectively, 6) improving the overall school climate.

Some appropriate categories for the literature search could include: conflict management resolution, motivation, conflict resolution, elementary education, secondary education, behavior problems, child abuse, cooperative learning, self-esteem, teaching methods, teamwork, and peer mediation.

The questions related to the teaching of social skills included:

1. Do we need to re-teach all the social skills?
2. Which of the social skills are most important for conflict resolution?
3. Can we assume that the students have already learned and practiced some social skills at home?
4. Which of the social skills used for conflict resolution overlap with the social skills used in cooperative learning?

The social skills will not be addressed as a whole. Rather, the specific social skills including role models, cultural differences, self-esteem, peer pressure and communication will be studied individually.

The questions related to students' role models included:

1. To what extent, if any, do adult role models effect students' ability to resolve conflicts effectively?

2. Can teachers alone provide enough modeling to change student behaviors?

3. Is it possible for students to help their families resolve conflicts through the conflict resolution strategies learned at school?

The questions relating to role models for conflict resolution were most easily answered by researching the results of poor conflict resolution. What happens when adults are unable to discuss, negotiate, arbitrate or compromise a solution? Gerstein and Reagan (1986) say that, "In some families and cultures conflict is seen as a clever child who is rewarded for disagreeing or arguing. Some groups encourage arguing, and the more visible conflict becomes the better everyone feels," (p.23). Landau (1984), in writing about child abuse states, "Parents who fail as caretakers and mistreat their children are usually found to have little or no preparation for their role" (p.10). Therefore, they cannot act as appropriate role models in order to provide their children with means by which to constructively resolve conflict. As violence continues to threaten the future of families and civilizations, "Infants and young children that have been abused . . . tend to carry out their injuries into adolescence," (Fontana & Besharov, 1977, p.11). Thus, without positive role models, the inability to resolve conflicts will be an ongoing process,

continuing for generations.

A summary of the literature which addressed the questions related to role models suggested the following strategies:

1. Teach students to resolve conflicts constructively through negotiating.
2. Teach students to resolve conflicts constructively through win-win strategies.
3. Teach students to become positive role models for others.

The questions related to students' cultural differences included:

1. To what extent do students understand and appreciate their own culture?
2. From where do students obtain their prejudices?
3. Can conflict resolution training better prepare students for life in a multi-cultural world?
4. How many gang conflicts are related to cultural and ethnic disputes?
5. Do varied religious backgrounds cause conflicts among students?

The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (1990) shows that, "children . . . can play a powerful role in creating a more peaceful world" (p.3). A conflict resolution program, implemented at Community Unit School District 15 in New York, showed that 78.6 percent of the students surveyed felt that their sensitivity to children whose backgrounds were

different from their own had increased. Among the teachers surveyed, 71.5 percent felt that their students were improved in the skill of understanding one anothers' point of view. The surveyed teachers also noted a 66.7 percent decrease in name calling and verbal put-downs often associated with cultural differences. Several lessons teaching skills for peace were among the most widely used among the students. The National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME) (1992), in stating the history of conflict resolution, suggested that conflict resolution be taught as part of social studies. Early leaders in the field of conflict resolution tried to increase students understanding of conflict resolution in order to help them better understand the resolution mechanisms present in the governments of their schools and communities. The International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (ICCCR) (1993) is credited with using cooperation in conjunction with conflict resolution strategies to help decrease the competetiveness often brought about by religious and racial quarrels. The ICCCR also collaborates with Teachers College and requesting school systems to train Peace Corps volunteers in ethnically diverse, inner-city schools through peace education. An emphasis on, " . . . listening to others' points of view and the peaceful resolution of differences assists in preparing students to live in a multicultural world,"

(Porter, 1985, p.27). Conflict resolution proved to be successful in ending gang-related violence. The school persuaded the leaders of the three major gangs to meet for two hours twice a week for one month. The gang members were allowed to set their own mediation rules, including no name calling, no weapons, and complete confidentiality (Williams, 1992). The gang leaders and school principal signed an agreement to try to end disputes peacefully. Within one month the opposing gang members were playing soccer together, and giving "high fives." Gerstin and Reagan state that, "Listening that is rooted in care for others, even strangers from very different cultural backgrounds, can have astonishing consequences," (1986: xiv).

A summary of the literature which addressed the questions related to cultural differences suggested the following strategies:

1. the teaching of active listening skills.
2. the teaching of peace making strategies.
3. teaching students to respect confidentiality.
4. teaching students not to call each other names.
5. teaching students not to use verbal put downs.
6. incorporate conflict resolution strategies into set curricula.

The questions related to peer pressure included:

1. Are males or females more effected by peer pressure?

2. Will the number of conflicts resulting from peer pressure decrease after conflict management training has taken place?

3. Will the learning of conflict resolution help students become more accepting of differences among their peers?

4. Will students actually seek out a peer mediator to solve conflicts involving peer pressure?

5. Within the confidential setting provided by the conflict resolution program, where students do not have to be concerned with impressing their peers, will students be able to come up with fair solutions and avoid physical confrontations?

Self-esteem questions included:

1. Does conflict resolution increase students' self-esteem?

2. Would improved self-esteem help students work together more effectively to solve conflicts?

3. What is there about mediation training that makes students feel better about themselves?

4. After mediation training, would students themselves notice an improved self image?

5. Would mediators or the students in the control group show higher gains

in self-esteem?

6. Would teachers notice an increase in self-esteem among their students?

7. Would the self-esteem of both males and females increase at the same rate?

According to the National Association for Mediation in Education (1989), it is generally believed that conflict resolution training helps the student conflict managers feel better about themselves, but the basis for these beliefs and the ways training accomplished these ends is not clearly known. Dinkmeyer and Losoncvy (1980) say that "human beings increase their self-esteem, self confidence, and feelings of worth when they are recognized" (p. 59). Being a student mediator and holding a position where your peers would recognize you as a person of authority, having the ability to help them solve their problems, would give the students an opportunity to be recognized. Glaser (1986) feels that students, even good students, don't feel important in school because no one listens to them. Being a conflict manager would give students the feeling of being in a position of power where students will listen to them. Dinkmeyer and Losoncy (1980) point out that often students who feel inadequate lack confidence in their ability and perceive life as "unfair" because they may try very hard, but

their efforts still lead to failure. These students become discouraged and develop negative self-concepts. If a student fitting this description was able to become a successful conflict manager, it would give them an area where they could actually see the good that resulted from their efforts. This in turn would result in an increased self concept.

The results of a study conducted at the Social Science Education Consortum, Inc., based on interviews given to both teachers and students indicated that students of all ages felt better about themselves, behaved with greater self-assurance, and generally developed a more positive self-image after learning new skills in communications and conflict management (Greenawald & Johnson, as cited in Lam, 1987). The results from a statewide program which included students of all ages conducted at the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution done in 1987 showed that the group of students actually doing the mediating in their mediation program had significantly larger gains than the control group on the self-concept skill. This would indicate that students benefited from being in the leadership position within the mediation group (Jenkins & Smith, as cited in Lam, 1987). Teacher questionaires and interviews given in Brooklyn, New York (1988) indicated that 87% of the teachers participating felt that there was increased self-esteem among their

students participating in the conflict resolution program. An evaluation of the results of a study done in Washington, D.C. on Enhancing Adolescents Self Image (1986) showed self image scores increased significantly for both males and females after the peer mediation program was in place, but there were more dramatic increases for males (from below average to average.)

According to a research project conducted at the University of Hawaii on Dispute Management in the Schools, males and females were both effected by peer-pressure. However, the types of conflicts arising from peer pressure was somewhat different. Females were most likely to be involved in gossip/rumor and arguments, while males were most likely to be involved in harassment disputes. In a statewide program which included students of all ages conducted at the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution in Albuquerque, it was found that students who had been mediators in the program showed significantly larger gains than the disputants in their relations, and had better knowledge of problem solving/conflict resolution skills. Thus, these students were better able to negotiate with their peers and were better able to resolve conflicts arrising from peer-pressure. A summary of Significant Findings on the Resolution of Conflict done in Brooklyn, New York, showed their was more

acceptance of differences and greater understanding of other points of view by students who had participated in their study. Kort (1990) states that for the first time, students were able to listen to each other without focusing on blame. In a confidential setting, where they didn't have to impress their peers, they came up with a solution that each felt was fair. These students had actually sought out the peer mediation program in order to avoid a physical confrontation that was to occur after school.

A summary of the literature which addressed the questions related to peer pressure and low self- esteem suggested the following strategies:

1. All children should be classroom mediators, not only the ones most naturally suited for it.

2. Social skills needed for effective resolution of problems needs to be taught, retaught, reviewed and taught again until they are embedded in the students (Burke, 1992).

3. In teaching the procedure for conflict resolution teacher need to follow four steps:

1. Explain

   a) give concrete definition of the procedures

   b) provide the reason or rationale

   c) demonstrate the procedure

d) present the task step by step

e) explain and demonstrate cues

2. Rehearse the procedure

3. Provide feedback to individuals and the class

4. Reteach procedures as necessary (Evertson & Harris, 1991, p.2 as cited by Burke1992).

The questions related to communication skills included:

1. Will communication skills improve as the conflict resolution process is learned?

2. What activities will most positively effect communication skills?

According to Tales of Schoolyard Mediation (UPDATE on Law Related Education, 1985) the use of a mediation program to resolve disputes results in improved communication between and among students as well as teachers, parents and administrators. In 1987 two schools in Colorado Springs developed a conflict resolution program. A summary of the findings from this study was published in The Impact of Conflict Resolution Programs on Schools (Lam,1989). The summary restated that the ability of students to identify their own feelings and those of others increased.

A summary of the literature suggested the following strategies which

addressed the communication questions:

1. Teach negotiation skills to help establish a base for interacting with peers and adults (Johnson & Johnson 1991).

2. Allow much practice of newly taught skills.

Johnson and Johnson (1991) state that negotiation is used to resolve conflicts of interests. Negotiation is a process by which people come to an agreement and work out a settlement. The persons involved have shared or opposite interests. The process is necessary to continue to relate to each other and to resolve different interests. There are five basic steps in negotiating: (Teaching Students to Be Peacemakers, 1991)

1. Jointly define the conflict.

2. Exchanging reason and rationale for the position.

3. Reversing perspective.

4. Inventing options for mutual benefit.

5. Reaching a wise agreement.

The questions related to improved school climate included:

1. As the conflict resolution process is practiced, does sensitivity toward others increase?

2. Do students become more comfortable with their own feelings as they develop the conflict resolution skills?

3. Does student behavior in school improve?

4. Which teaching strategies can be used to encourage positive school climate?

An evaluation of a conflict resolution program in Brooklyn, New York was done in 1990 (The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program: 1988-1989). The summary stated more than 84 percent of the respondents to a survey reported they noticed positive changes in their class climates. The respondents attribute the changes to the teaching of conflict resolution. The same evaluation reported the teachers particularly noticed that students are showing and increased understanding of others and an increased sensitivity toward others. Teachers made many statements regarding the positive impact the conflict resolution program had on classroom climates. One teacher stated, "Students feel they can express their own feeling freely, being accepted for doing so"..."Students are much more mindful of not using put-downs. Also, students are much more in touch with their feelings and their reasons for getting angry." (Metis Associates, Inc., 1990, p.11). The summary lists that 70.9 percent of the teachers observed that the children are demonstrating less physical violence in the classroom and 66.3 percent observed less name-calling and fewer verbal put-downs. Richard Cohen, director of School Mediation

Associates says, "On average, 85 percent of potentially violent incidents end in a peaceful resolution" (Teacher Magazine, 1991 p.2).

A summary of the literature suggested the following strategies which addressed the improved school climate questions:

1) Instruct students in conflict resolution.

2) Implement the conflict resolution program school wide.

3) Implement the conflict resolution program district wide.

Project Outcomes

The terminal objective of this problem intervention was related to the data presented in chapter 2, from the collection tools and the pre-intervention survey. The pre-intervention data collected for a period of ten days indicated 25 incidents of inappropriate behavior and a total of 71 minutes spent during the ten school days for disciplinary purposes. Probable cause data, presented in chapter 2 and the solution strategies presented in the first part of chapter 3, suggested a need for developing a conflict resolution program and for the implementation of the strategies to familiarize the students with a tool for solving problems with their peers and the teacher.

Therefore:

As a result of the learning of conflict resolution strategies, during the period of September 1993 to December 1994, the third grade target class

will show a 30 percent decrease in the number of inappropriate behaviors and a 30 percent decrease in the time spent by the teacher for disciplinary purposes.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following process objectives defined the proposed procedures for problem resolution.

1) As a result of developing lesson plans on the steps for conflict resolution, students will become familiar with a tool for solving problems with their peers and the teacher.

2) As a result of 30 minutes of training per day for 30 days, the students will learn and practice a process for solving conflicts among themselves and with the teacher.

Proposal Solution Components

The major elements of the approach used to reduce the problem fell into two categories; development of a program to familiarize students with conflict resolution, and training for 30 minutes for 30 days to learn and practice the process. These categories relate to the terminal objective in that they attempt to give the students a tool to solve conflicts. The discrepancy data indicated the students had no prior training or skills to resolve conflicts on their own. Probable cause data indicated an ineffective use of problem solving among themselves and with the teacher.

Chapter 4

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Description of Problem Resolution Activities

The action plan is designed to address five major solution components: conflict resolution problem development, data collection and pre-intervention survey, implementation of program, collection of post-program data and post- intervention survey, and determine future action plan.

The conflict resolution program development phase of the plan consisted of the meeting of the research team during the summer of 1993 to design a program for conflict resolution. The program included lessons addressing the issues of: social skills, role models, cultural differences, self-esteem, peer-pressure, communication, and school climate.

The data collection began the first day of school and continued for ten days. The research team used incident reports, teacher reflection journals, tally sheets, and a time spent on disciplinary purposes record. At the end of the first ten days the research team administered a pre-intervention survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine students' attitudes and understanding of conflict resolution.

The third phase was the implementation of the conflict resolution

program. This consisted of 30, thirty minute lessons beginning in September and continuing through October. After completion of the instructional phase of the program the children were allowed to practice the skills learned from November through January, with occasional re-teaching occurring as needed.

After implementing the conflict resolution program, the research team collected the post-intervention data in the same way the pre-intervention data was collected. Also in this phase, the research team administered the post-survey to the students.

The last phase is to determine the future action plan in order to improve or change the conflict resolution training program. At the completion of each phase, the research team met to analyze, compile, and compare the data.

The plan for implementing the conflict resolution strategies are listed below in the order in which they were implemented.

1. Provide for conflict resolution development.

   A. Who: The research team comprised of one second grade teacher, one third grade teacher, and one high school Spanish teacher.

   B. What: They created a conflict resolution program.

   C. When: This occurred during the summer of 1993

D. Where: Work took place at the homes of the research team members.

E. How: They used the resources collected, university personnel expertise, and the three teachers working collectively.

F. Why: They worked to create a new conflict resolution program to be used at the individual teaching sites.

2. Pre-intervention data collection

A. Who: The three teachers and the students of a second grade class, a third grade class, and two separate classes of high school Spanish One participated.

B. What: The research team and the students participated in order to collect pre-intervention data.

C. When: The pre-intervention data was collected the first ten days of school (September 7-21, 1993).

D. Where: The data was collected in the one second grade classroom, the one third grade classroom, and the two high school Spanish One classrooms.

E. How: The data was collected by means of incident reports, teacher reflection journal, and time spent on conflict resolution records.

F. Why: The data was collected in order to prove probable cause for the problem statement.

3. Research team collaboration

A. Who: The research team

B. What: The research team met in order to compare, contrast, and compile the data collected.

C. When: The research team met after the pre-intervention data was collected, September 22nd.

D. Where: The research team met in their homes.

E. How: The research team met in order to compile the pre-intervention data.

F. Why: The research team determined the extent of the problem in the target group as determined by the amount of time spent for disciplinary purposes, the number of incidences reported, and the type of incidences reported.

4. Administer the pre-intervention survey to the students.

A. Who: The target classes.

B. What: The pre-intervention survey of students was administered.

C. When: The survey was administered on Thursday, September

22nd.

D. How: The research team members read the survey orally to the students as they responded to the questions.

E. Where: The survey was administered in the individual target classrooms.

F. Why: The survey aided in determining probable cause.

5. Research team collaboration

A. Who: The research team

B: What: The research team met in order to analyze, compile, and compare the data collected from the from the Pre-Intervention Survey of Students.

C. When: The research team met the evening of Thursday, September 23rd.

D. Where: The research team met in their homes.

E. How: The research team tallied their results and made tables and charts of survey results.

F. The results served to help show probable cause.

6. Implement conflict resolution strategies.

A. Who: The four target classes participated.

B. What: The classes participated in thirty 30 minute lessons on

conflict resolution.

C. When: The lessons started September 27th and ended October ninth.

D. Where: The teaching of conflict resolution strategies occurred in the four target classrooms.

E. How: The target classes learned conflict resolution strategies through role-playing, modeling, practicing and applying several different conflict resolution tools.

F. Why: The conflict resolution strategies were learned, practiced, and overlearned.

7. Research team collaboration.

A. Who: The research team

B. What: The research team met to discuss and reflect on conflict resolution strategies used in the target classes.

C. When: The research team met one evening per week-night.

D. How: The research team brought data and reflection journals collected from target classes for discussion.

E. How: The research team participated in a discussion of the conflict resolution strategies used in the target classes.

F. Why: The research team benefited from the discussions of the

conflict resolution strategies used in the target classes.

8. Continuous conflict resolution practice (overpractice).

A. Who: The research team and the target classes participated.

B. What: The conflict resolution strategies were learned, reinforced and utilized.

C. When: The conflict resolution practice took place November 15th through January 28th.

D. Where: The practice took place in the target classrooms.

E. How: The target classes continually practiced the conflict resolution skills learned.

F. Why: Continuous practice and utilization of the conflict resolution skills learned internalized the conflict resolution process.

9. Post-intervention data collection.

A. Who: The research team

B. What: The research team collected the Post-Intervention Data.

C. When: The data was collected for 10 days, January 31st through February 14th.

D. Where: The data was collected in the target classrooms.

E How: The Post-Intervention Data was collected by means of

incident reports, teacher reflection journals, tally sheets, and records kept on time spent for disciplinary purposes.

F. Why: The post-intervention data was compared and contrasted with the pre-intervention data.

10. Post-intervention survey of students.

A. Who: The research team and the target classes.

B. What: The post-intervention survey of students was administered to the target classes.

C. When: The post-intervention survey of students was administered on February 15, 1994.

D. Where: The survey was administered in the target classrooms.

E. How: The research team read the survey orally as the students responded to the questions.

F. Why: The post-intervention data was used to compare and contrast with the pre-intervention data collected.

11. Research team collaboration.

A. Who: The research team

B. What: The research team met in order to compare, contrast, and compile the data collected in the pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys of students. The research team also drew

conclusions from the data collected.

C. When: The research team met on February 17th.

D. Where: They met in their homes.

E. How: The research team created tallies, charts and graphs in order to better interpret the data collected.

F. Why: The research team used the pre and post-intervention data from which they drew conclusions.

12. Determine future action plan.

A. Who: The research team.

B. What: The research team determined ways to improve plans for conflict resolution and determined changes needed in order to improve the conflict resolution program.

C. When: The research team met throughout the month of February.

D. Where: They met in their homes.

E. How: The research team evaluated the process of implementing conflict resolution, the processes of data collection, and the results of the conflict resolution program.

F. Why: The research team strove to make the conflict resolution program the best it could be. The research team made recommendations

for future use of the program.

Methods of Assessment

A variety of data collection methods were used in order to assess the effects of the intervention. The research team used three data collection tools including; a) incident report/teacher journal b) time spent on conflict resolution/discipline report, c) pre-post-intervention survey. The pre/post-intervention was an adaptation of a survey published by NAME. The research team chose approximately five questions relating to each probable cause issue. All three of the data collection tools were used as pre-intervention and post-intervention. There was no data collection during the thirty days of training.

The incident report/teacher journal were documented through class observation by the teacher and journal entries based on teacher observation and conversations with students. These incident reports/teacher journals documented the type and number of incidents that occurred each day.

The chart recording teacher time spent resolving conflcts showed the amount of time spent daily recorded in minutes. This time spent will be documented by the teacher at the end of each day.

The pre and post intervention surveys were used to identify the

areas perceived as causes of conflict. These areas included school climate, peer pressure, social skills, communication, and self-esteem.

Chapter 5

EVALUATION OF RESULTS AND PROCESS

Implementation History

Terminal Objectives

The terminal objective of the intervention addressed the high number of inappropriate behaviors and the amount of time spent by the teacher for disciplinary purposes. Pre-intervention survey results indicated that the students had problems with the way they perceive adults resolve conflict, peer pressure, self-esteem, cultural differences, communication skills and school climate (Appendix A).

Therefore, the terminal objective stated:

> As a result of the learning of conflict resolution strategies, during the period of September 1993 to December 1994, the second grade target class will show a 30 percent decrease in the number of inappropriate behaviors and a 30 percent decrease in the time spent by the teacher for disciplinary purposes.

Pre-Assessment Activities

The development of conflict resolution strategies to address the number of inappropriate behaviors and the amount of time spent by the teacher for disciplinary purposes began with the assessment of the data collected through a ten day observation period followed by the pre-intervention survey of students. This activity took place at the beginning

of the 1993-1994 school year. The need for intervention was clear, thus the research team developed a conflict resolution curriculum.

Interventions

The conflict resolution program had five phases; the development of a conflict resolution program, pre-intervention data collection, the implmentation of the conflict resolution program, the collection of post-intervention data, and determination of a future action plan. The classes devoted 30 minutes for 30 days to learn the process. After completion of the instructional phase, the children practiced these skills learned with occasional re-teaching occurring as needed.

Post-Assessment Activities

After implementation of the conflict resolution program the research team collected the post-intervention data in the same way the pre-intervention data was collected. In this phase the research team administered the post-intervention survey to the students. The post-intervention survey was identical to the pre-intervention survey.

Presentation and Analysis of Project Results

In order to assess the effects of the planned intervention, the research team documented the amount of time spent each day for student/student or student/teacher conflicts, the number and type of

conflicts occurring each day, and the data collected with regards to role-modeled behavior.

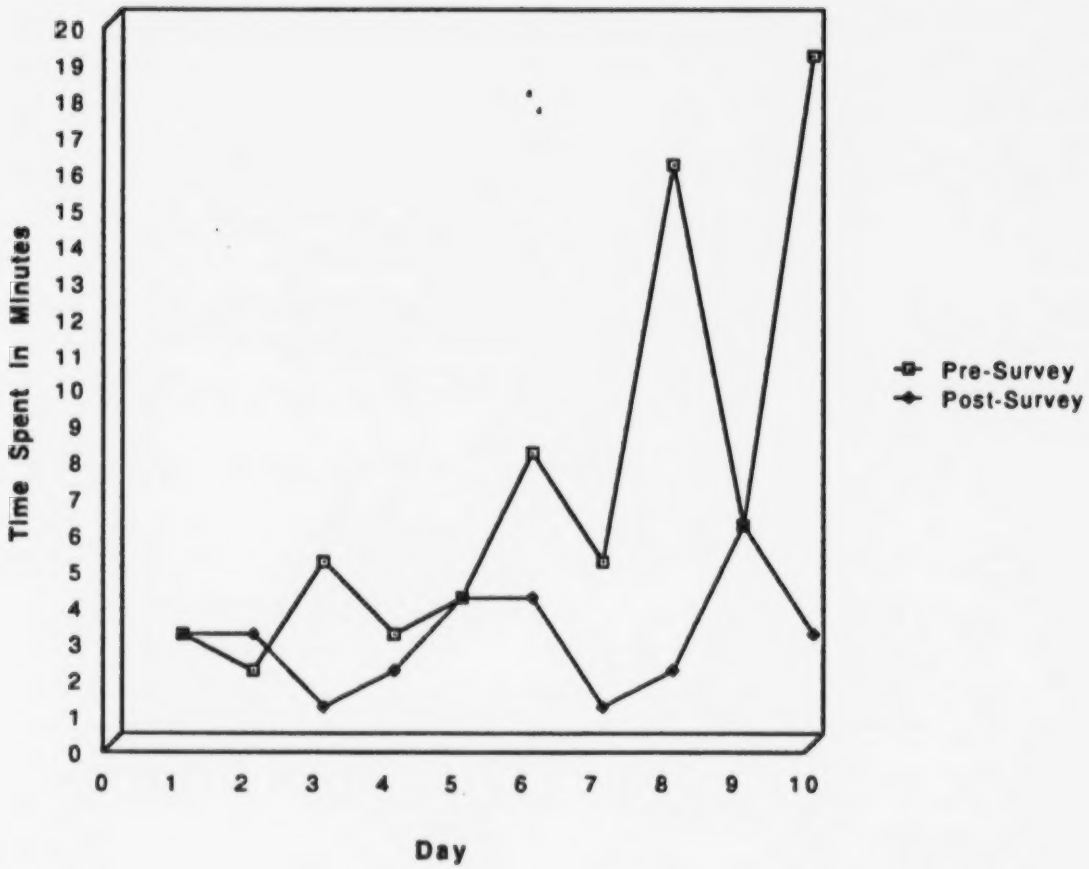

Figure 4

Pre and Post Time Spent Resolving

Student Conflict

Table 4 presents the pre and post-intervention data collected from the third grade class with regards to time spent for student/student or teacher/student conflicts during the ten day period. The data indicate improvement in the amount of time spent resolving student conflict from the pre to post-intervention.

Table 1

Number and Type of Conflicts

Days	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Tattling				1	1	1			2	3	8
Hitting	1			1		1			2		5
Interruption		1				1	1				3
Off-Task			1				1	1	1		4
Name-Calling					1					2	3
Other			1							1	2
Total											25

Table 2

Number and Type of Conflict

Days	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Tattling	1		1	2			1		2		7
Hitting									1		1
Interruption	1	2	1								4
Off-Task	1			1	1	1					4
Name-Calling		1			1	1			1		4
Other											
Total											20

Tables 1 and 2 present the data collected through teacher journals. The teacher journal allowed for specific documentation of the type and number of conflicts per day. There is a decrease in the number of conflicts cited during the ten day period.

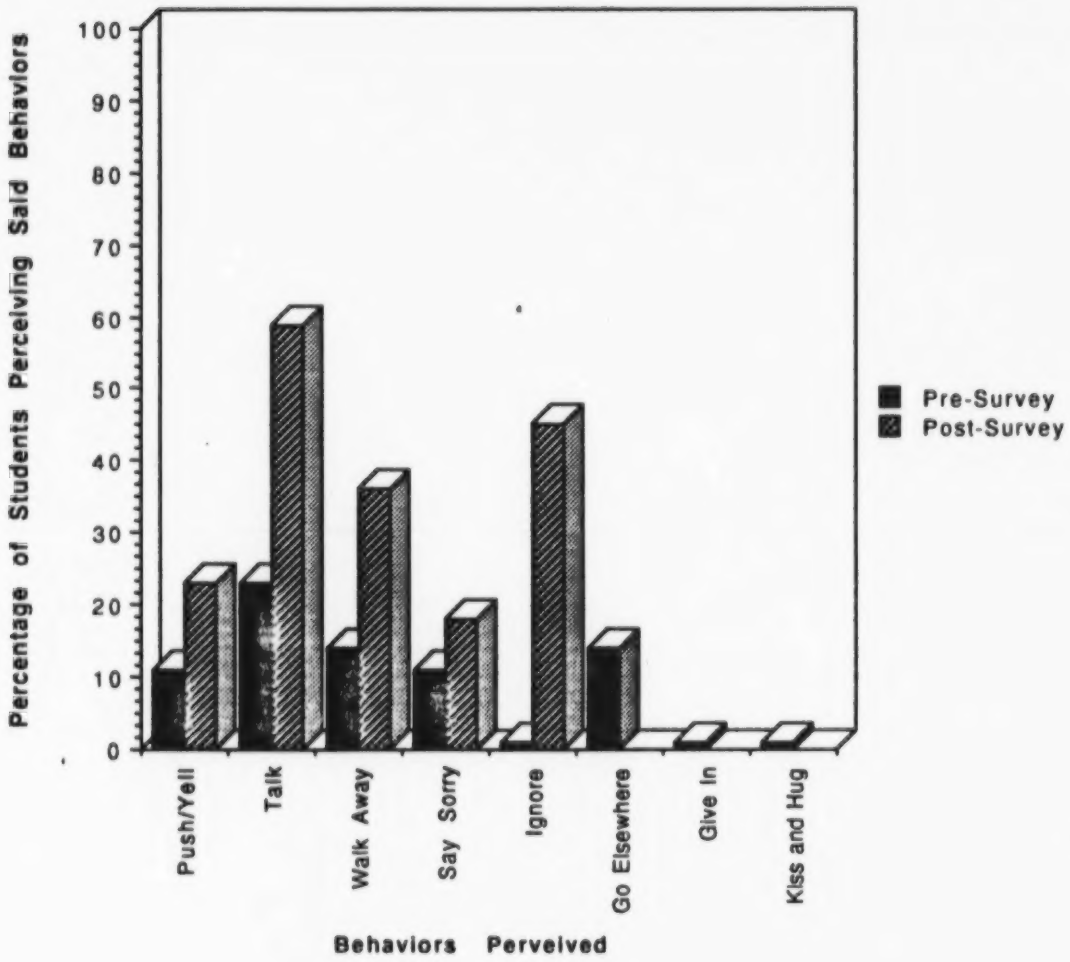

Figure 5

Pre and Post-Intervention Role Modeled Behaviors

Figure 5 presents the data collected with regards to role modeled behaviors. On both the pre and the post-intervention surveys, the students were asked to list three ways in which they had seen adults solve

disagreements. There was a decrease in the percentage of students who had observed their role models going elsewhere, giving in, and kissing and hugging. There was an increase in the percentage of students who had observed their role models yelling, talking, walking away, and ignoring.

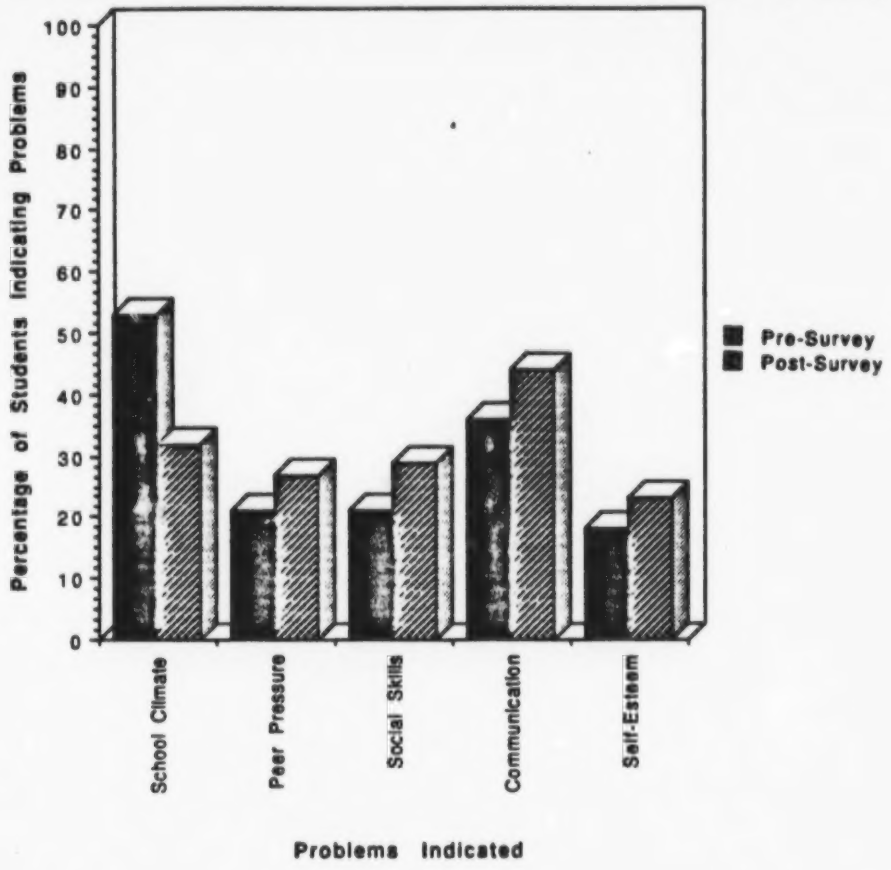

Figure 6

Pre and Post-Intervention Survey Results

Figure 6 shows the percentage of students indicating problems with school climate, peer pressure, social skills, communication, and self-esteem. This information was obtained through the administration of the

pre and post-intervention survey of students. The number of students indicating problems with school climate decreased by 21 percent. The number of students indicating problems with peer pressure increased by six percent. The number of students indicating problems with social skills increased by eight percent. The percentage of those indicating problems with communication increased by eight percent. The number of students indicating problems with self-esteem increased by five percent.

Reflections and Conclusions

Because the teaching of conflict resolution is also the teaching of a communication skill, as well as a social skill, it would be expected that the percent of students perceiving a problem in this area would have decreased to a large degree. However, in analyzing the process of conflict resolution, the research team realized that by making students more aware of all the skills involved in communicating such as listening, paraphrasing, making eye contact, and using effective body language, the students learned that communication is difficult and became more aware of their weaknesses in that area.

The school climate improved with the conflict resolution training by empowering the students to solve their own conflicts, rather than involving the teacher. The students learned how to understand the

severity of their problems, differentiating between the problems in which a teacher should be involved, and those they could solve themselves. Often the students were able to modify the conflict resolution process in order to fit the problem.

The students developed a new vocabulary that helped them to express how they felt, what their partner felt, and how they saw adults express what they felt. This new vocabulary may have also influenced the way the students answered the questions with regards to how they see adults resolve conflicts. Where the students may have once said, "talk," they now had the vocabulary to say things such as "negotiate" or "compromise."

Although the terminal objective of a 30 percent decrease in the number of innapropriate behaviors and in the time spent by the teacher for disciplinary purposes was not accomplished, the number of innapropriate behaviors and the time spent by the teacher for disciplinary purposes did decrease. The program was a success in that the teacher has more time to spend on instruction.

The program could also be considered a success because the students now have a life-long tool with which they can resolve their own conflicts. The students saw the value of the conflict resolution training, and brought

it home to teach to their siblings and parents. Parents and teachers alike expressed interest in the conflict resolution program, generated by the results they had witnessed.

Chapter 6

DECISIONS ON THE FUTURE

Solution Strategy

The data indicate that the conflict resolution program should be continued. Modifications of the original program are suggested. Since conflict resolution is a series of skills that students will use throughout their lives, it would be worthwhile for schools to use time to teach conflict resolution skills, or allow time for reflection upon these skills, every school day. This would help the students to react automatically in order to use these skills when appropriate.

At first the research team felt it was necessary to assess the ways in which students see adults solve conflict for the post data presented. However, upon analysis of the post data, the research team realized this data was not linked to the students' progress in the conflict resolution program. The adults' behavior had not changed. The students' vocabulary used to describe these behaviors had changed. In the future, the research team would not include the post-intervention survey questions related to how students see adults solve conflict.

The research team saw the data collected on time spent for disciplinary purposes and the types of conflict observed to be very useful

data. Not only was the data easy to collect and document without interrupting the teaching process, but it was also a valuable assessment tool when evaluating the effectiveness of the conflict resolution program. A future recommendation is that the teacher periodically collect data on the types of conflicts occurring in the classroom in order to determine which lessons need to be re-taught or reinforced.

In order for the conflict resolution process to be an effective classroom management technique, it is imperative for the teacher to consistently allow the students time for prompt negotiation, and to conference with the students about their chosen solution. The time used for conflict resolution should not be considered a punishment.

Additional Applications

Interest in the conflict resolution program spread throughout the schools in which it was practiced. On the playground, for example, the students trained in conflict resolution came in contact with other students who had not been trained in conflict resolution. Conflict on the playground required teacher intervention. The trained students felt a need to develop a campaign to advocate the program to the untrained students. When the interest was apparent, the trained students made posters to present the steps for conflict resolution to the other grade level

classrooms. The students then modeled the steps for conflict resolution to the interested classes. In some instances, the students were asked to return to some classrooms in order to work with small groups on conflict resolution training.

During the same period, teachers untrained in conflict resolution were involved in a brief introduction to conflict resolution at a staff meeting. The research team members guided a question and answer period in order to convince the other teachers of the effectiveness of the program. Through the dissemination of the data collected, the research team was able to generate interest among other staff members. These interested staff members agreed to participate in staff development conflict resolution training the following year.

Dissemination of Data and Recommendations

It seems to the authors that the conflict resolution program is a program that is beneficial to all schools. The authors recommend that schools that have a problem with violence and gangs will benefit greatly from a conflict resolution program. The research team noticed the number of violent behaviors decreases as students learn more effective tools for solving their conflicts. As a result, there was a decreases in the amount of time spent for disciplinary purposes. Educators will have more time

for instruction as students learn effective ways in which to solve their own conflicts.

The conflict resolution program is a program that is applicable from kindergarten through grade 12. Schools should implement a conflict resolution program in all grade levels in order to teach or reinforce varied ways of resolving conflicts, as well as basic social skills. Students' behaviors improve when they and the teachers know what skills have been learned and practiced previously. Next year, the research team will expand the program to include all classrooms in their grade level. The research team, then, plans to continue to expand the program each year, as the students advance from one grade level to the next. Within three to five years the program will have spread to a building-wide program.

In order for the conflict resolution program to grow to a district level, it is obviously necessary to train the staff in the conflict resolution procedures. At the beginning stages the staff training will occur be done on a volunteer basis, either before or after school. When money is allocated to help pay for the staff training, it can then be a mandatory program, involving all the district staff. It is important for teachers and staff, alike, to be consistent in the ways in which they solve conflict.

Parents should involve themselves in a conflict resolution program at home. In several instances students used the negotiation procedures at home with their siblings or parents. Parents responded positively to the program, and asked for additional information in order to use the conflict resolution program at home. In a situation where both students and parents are interested in learning new procedures for solving conflicts, the conflict resolution program is a very effective tool. Schools should provide conflict resolution training for the parents, so that the conflict resolution skills used by the students in school could be learned, practiced and applied to situations outside the classroom. The program, however, is effective only if the participants support the program.

The research team concludes that if the conflict resolution program is successful with the students, staff and parents, the community as a whole will benefit.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

PRE-INTERVENTION SURVEY OF STUDENTS

Dear Student,

In order to help us study the usefullness of conflict resolution training, we would like you to answer a few questions about yourself, and how you feel about conflict in your life. All your answers are private and confidential. The results of this survey will be reported only as totals and averages for many students combined; no report will show the answers that any one student gave. For the questions below, there are no right or wrong answers, and your answers will not affect how well you do in the training. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Please circle (or fill in) the answer that best describes you or how you feel.

1. I am: 1. Male 2. Female

2. How old were you on your last birthday? _____ years old.

3. Which one of these groups best describes you?
   1. White or Anglo
   2. Black
   3. Latino/Latina
   4. Asian
   5. Other

4. At the end of school last year were your grades:

High School	Elementary School
1. Mostly A's	1. very good
2. Mostly B's	2. good
3. Mostly C's	3. average
4. Mostly D's	4. below average
5. Mostly F's	5. poor

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
5. Even if other kids would think I'm weird I would try to stop a fight.	1	2	3	4
6. It's O.K. for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
7. If people do something to make me really mad, they deserve to be beaten up.	1	2	3	4
8. Sometimes a person doesn't have any choice but to fight.	1	2	3	4
9. There are better ways to solve problems than fighting.	1	2	3	4
10. I try to talk out a problem instead of fighting.	1	2	3	4
11. If I'm mad at someone I just ignore them.	1	2	3	4
12. I like school and look forward to coming most days.	1	2	3	4
13. It's hard to know what to do when I get mad at someone.	1	2	3	4
14. Most kids would like to have me for a friend.	1	2	3	4
15. Most of the time I feel good about myself.	1	2	3	4
16. I treat other people well.	1	2	3	4
17. I can think of at least one thing I'm good at.	1	2	3	4
18. When kids I'm with do something bad I usually go along with them.	1	2	3	4
19. It's easy for me to explain things to people.	1	2	3	4
20. I'm good at asking questions when I want to find something out.	1	2	3	4
21. When people talk I have a hard time paying attention.	1	2	3	4

	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree Somewhat	3 Disagree Somewhat	4 Strongly Disagree
22. It's hard to figure out how other people are feeling.				
23. Students take part in solving their own problems in school and in the classroom.	1	2	3	4
24. Students from different backgrounds and cultures respect each other at school	1	2	3	4
25. Teachers spend too much time disciplining students.	1	2	3	4
26. Students can't really solve their own problems at school. They need help from an adult.	1	2	3	4

	Always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Almost never	Never
How much of the time would **you** think that you . . .					
27. are a good kid?	1	2	3	4	5
28. obey rules?	1	2	3	4	5
29. stay out of trouble?	1	2	3	4	5
How much of the time would **other students** think that you . . .					
30. are a good kid?	1	2	3	4	5
31. obey rules?	1	2	3	4	5
32. stay out of trouble?	1	2	3	4	5
How much of the time would **your teachers** think that you . . .					
33. are a good kid?	1	2	3	4	5
34. obey rules?	1	2	3	4	5

35. stay out of trouble? 1 2 3 4 5

List three ways that you see **adults** solve disagreements:

36. _____

37. _____

38. _____

Appendix B

Conflict Resolution Program Outline

First 10 days: Data collection: Time spent and number of conflicts.
Begin: **Sept.7- Sept. 21** Survey: **Sept. 22**

Day 1: Introduce - What are conflicts?
Brainstorm ways students resolve conflicts.

Day 2: Cause-effect circles. Use brainstorm list from previous lesson to model the cause-effect circle. Choose one way to resolve conflict. Each group chooses one way and complete cause-effect. Each group shares their circle. Show the negotiation steps chart.

Day 3: Sing peacemaker song. Negotiation- define/introduce.
Step 1: What I want/you want. Model with student
Pg. 3:52 Practice. Do concentric circles. Use a real cookie on the last practice.

Day 4: Step 2: What I want/ you want, I feel/you feel. pg. 3:53
Line up- take a walk. Use a real book last practice time.
Class share- do it quick, share favorite or best.

Day 5: Step 3: Want/want, feel/feel, why/why.
pg. 3:54 Give situation then do point of view. pg 3:77

Day 6: The Maligned Wolf. (point of view)

Day 7: *Reinforce active listening skills, practice.
Knee to knee activity- tell most embarassing moment in school. Discuss.

Day 8: Step 4: Understanding you/me. pg. 3:55
Rules of paraphrasing

Day 9: Paraphrasing activity. 4 corners. pg. 3:78

Day 10: Step 5: Make 3 plans, pg. 3:56

Day 11: Pg. 3:75, 3:76 Elephant story.
Read, discuss-new end of story as a whole group.

Day 12: Dear Abby- 3 plans. pg. 3:84,85,86

Day 13: Role plays- Yellow book

Day 14,15,16,17- Role plays to practice negotiation.

Day 18: Managing anger- Pg. 5:28,29
With a partner share the completion of "Understanding my anger." Make lists. Song: Peace Rap.

Day 19: List ways of dealing with anger from day before. Discuss other ways using pg. 171 (yellow book). "Stop and think."

Day 20: Hot headed/cool headed pgs.172,173 . Interpretations-discussion pg. 5:36 "It's not what others think."

Day 21: Keeping cool pg.126,127. " Please don't bother Becky"
Opt. when work is done pg. 128,129,130,131
Sing" Cool Off" song pg. 24.

Day 22: Put downs- 2 kids role play put-downs. (rest of class does not know) Go through ways of handling put downs on overhead. Practice. Do pgs. 5:44,45.
Have kids write 1 put down on paper. Put in bag. Draw for practice. (Tchr put down a cultural one) Discuss cultural put-downs. Sing color song.

Day 23: Stars and stripes. 77-81

Day 24: Begin conflict management training. Discuss how negotiation is so important, but sometimes not working- can use a conflict manager. Pg. 6 training manuel. Qualities of a conflict manager.

Day 25: Conflict management process. pg 8 (training manuel)
Begin with 1. Move to a private spot, or make arrangements for later. Sing "Solve It."

2. Explain and get agreement to rules.
   * agree to solve problem
   * no name calling
   * do not interrupt
   * be as honest as you can
3. Manager will decide who will talk first (the person who seems angriest).
4. Go through negotiation steps. (bridge)
5. Ask what can be done to avoid problem again?
   * ask do you feel the problem is solved?
   * keep it confidential
   * Congratulate
   * Fill out form

Role play in front of class. Pg. 6:58,59 "Jack and the Giant."
2 kids, teacher as manager.

Day 26: Review steps- do role plays using round robin act. 6:60 have observers tell what went well, what didn't. Report to class. Discuss as whole group.

Day 27: Do same- role play 2

Day 28,29,30: Role plays.